

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method of displaying electronic mail messages,  
2 comprising:

3 sorting a plurality of messages utilizing user-defined  
4 sort criteria including at least one criterion which is not  
5 alphabetic, chronological, or based on a previous viewing of  
6 corresponding messages;

7 ordering the plurality of messages according to the user-  
defined sort criteria; and

8 displaying the plurality of messages in the order  
9 specified by the user-defined sort criteria.

10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of sorting a  
11 plurality of messages utilizing user-defined sort criteria  
12 including at least one criterion which is not alphabetic,  
13 chronological or based on a previous viewing of corresponding  
14 messages further comprises:

15 sorting the plurality of messages based on a user-defined  
16 prioritization of a sender's address for each message.

17 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of sorting the  
18 plurality of messages based on a user-defined prioritization of  
19 a sender's address for each message further comprises:

20 comparing a sender's address for each message to a ranked  
21 list of senders' addresses.

1       4. The method of claim 3, wherein the step of comparing a  
2        sender's address for each message to a ranked list of senders'  
3        addresses further comprises:

4               comparing the sender's address for each message to a  
5        ranked list of senders' addresses including a set of fixed  
6        entries specified by a user and a set of dynamic entries  
7        containing addresses selected from historical message tracking  
8        information based on rules specified by the user.

9        5. The method of claim 3, wherein the step of comparing a  
10        sender's address for each message to a ranked list of senders'  
11        addresses further comprises:

12               comparing the sender's address for each message to a set  
13        of senders' addresses specified by a user as higher priority  
14        than other messages;

15               comparing the sender's address for each message to a set  
16        of senders' addresses automatically selected based on  
17        historical message tracking information as higher priority than  
18        other messages;

19               comparing the sender's address for each message to a set  
20        of senders' addresses specified by a user as lower priority  
21        than other messages; and

22               comparing the sender's address for each message to a first  
23        set of senders' addresses automatically selected based on  
24        historical message tracking information as lower priority than  
25        other messages.

26        6. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of ordering the

2       plurality of messages according to the user-defined sort  
3       criteria further comprises:

4            ordering the plurality of messages with any messages  
5        including a sender's address matching an address within a first  
6        entry within the ranked list listed first, with any messages  
7        including a sender's address matching an address within a  
8        second entry within the ranked list listed second, and with any  
9        messages including a sender's address matching an address  
10      within any subsequent entry within the ranked list listed at a  
11      corresponding position within an ordered listing of the  
12      plurality of messages.

13           7. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of sorting the  
14        plurality of messages based on a user-defined prioritization of  
15        a sender's address for each message further comprises:

16            comparing a sender's address within each message to  
17        addresses specified by a user.

18           8. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of sorting the  
19        plurality of messages based on a user-defined prioritization of  
20        a sender's address for each message further comprises:

21            comparing a sender's address within each message to  
22        addresses selected from a historical tracking of previous  
23        messages based upon rules specified by a user.

24           9. The method of claim 8, wherein the step of comparing a  
25        sender's address within each message to addresses selected from  
26        a historical tracking of previous messages based upon rules

ROC920000165US1

4       specified by a user further comprises at least one of:

5           selecting addresses from messages to which a user replies  
6           for higher listing within a sort order than addresses from  
7           messages to which the user never replies;

8           selecting addresses from messages to which a user replies  
9           more quickly than contemporaneous messages for higher listing  
10          within the sort order than other addresses;

11          selecting addresses from messages which a user opens more  
12          quickly than contemporaneous messages for higher listing within  
13          the sort order than other addresses;

14          selecting addresses from messages which a user opens more  
15          quickly than contemporaneous messages for lower listing within  
16          the sort order than other addresses; and

17          selecting addresses from messages which a user deletes  
18          without opening for lower listing within the sort order than  
19          other addresses.

ROC920000165US1

- 1        10. A system for displaying electronic mail messages,  
2        comprising:
  - 3                an electronic mail client application;
  - 4                a plurality of messages;
  - 5                means for sorting the plurality of messages utilizing  
6                user-defined sort criteria including at least one criterion  
7                which is not alphabetic, chronological, or based on a previous  
8                viewing of corresponding messages;
  - 9                means for ordering the plurality of messages according to  
10          the user-defined sort criteria; and
  - 11          means for displaying the plurality of messages in the  
12          order specified by the user-defined sort criteria.
- 13        11. The system of claim 1, wherein the means for sorting a  
14          plurality of messages utilizing user-defined sort criteria  
15          including at least one criterion which is not alphabetic,  
16          chronological or based on a previous viewing of corresponding  
17          messages further comprises:
  - 18                means for sorting the plurality of messages based on a  
19                user-defined prioritization of a sender's address for each  
20                message.
- 21        12. The system of claim 11, wherein the means for sorting the  
22          plurality of messages based on a user-defined prioritization of  
23          a sender's address for each message further comprises:
  - 24                comparing a sender's address for each message to a ranked  
25                list of senders' addresses.

1       13. The system of claim 12, wherein the means for comparing a  
2        sender's address for each message to a ranked list of senders'  
3        addresses further comprises:

4           means for comparing the sender's address for each message  
5        to a ranked list of senders' addresses including a set of fixed  
6        entries specified by a user and a set of dynamic entries  
7        containing addresses selected from historical message tracking  
8        information based on rules specified by the user.

1       14. The system of claim 12, wherein the means for comparing a  
2        sender's address for each message to a ranked list of senders'  
3        addresses further comprises:

4           means for comparing the sender's address for each message  
5        to a set of senders' addresses specified by a user as higher  
6        priority than other messages;

7           means for comparing the sender's address for each message  
8        to a set of senders' addresses automatically selected based on  
9        historical message tracking information as higher priority than  
10       other messages;

11       means for comparing the sender's address for each message  
12       to a set of senders' addresses specified by a user as lower  
13       priority than other messages; and

14       means for comparing the sender's address for each message  
15       to a first set of senders' addresses automatically selected  
16       based on historical message tracking information as lower  
17       priority than other messages.

1       15. The system of claim 11, wherein the means for ordering the

2       plurality of messages according to the user-defined sort  
3       criteria further comprises:

4           means for ordering the plurality of messages with any  
5       messages including a sender's address matching an address  
6       within a first entry within the ranked list listed first, with  
7       any messages including a sender's address matching an address  
8       within a second entry within the ranked list listed second, and  
9       with any messages including a sender's address matching an  
10      address within any subsequent entry within the ranked list  
11      listed at a corresponding position within an ordered listing of  
12      the plurality of messages.

13           16. The system of claim 11, wherein the means for sorting the  
14      plurality of messages based on a user-defined prioritization of  
15      a sender's address for each message further comprises:

16           means for comparing a sender's address within each message  
17      to addresses specified by a user.

18           17. The system of claim 11, wherein the means for sorting the  
19      plurality of messages based on a user-defined prioritization of  
20      a sender's address for each message further comprises:

21           means for comparing a sender's address within each message  
22      to addresses selected from a historical tracking of previous  
23      messages based upon rules specified by a user.

24           18. The system of claim 17, wherein the means for comparing a  
25      sender's address within each message to addresses selected from  
26      a historical tracking of previous messages based upon rules

4       specified by a user further comprises at least one of:  
5           means for selecting addresses from messages to which a  
6           user replies for higher listing within a sort order than  
7           addresses from messages to which the user never replies;  
8           means for selecting addresses from messages to which a  
9           user replies more quickly than contemporaneous messages for  
10           higher listing within the sort order than other addresses;  
11           means for selecting addresses from messages which a user  
12           opens more quickly than contemporaneous messages for higher  
13           listing within the sort order than other addresses;  
14           means for selecting addresses from messages which a user  
15           opens more quickly than contemporaneous messages for lower  
16           listing within the sort order than other addresses; and  
17           means for selecting addresses from messages which a user  
18           deletes without opening for lower listing within the sort order  
19           than other addresses.

1       19. A computer program product within a computer usable medium  
2       for displaying electronic mail messages, comprising:

3               instructions for sorting a plurality of messages utilizing  
4       user-defined sort criteria including at least one criterion  
5       which is not alphabetic, chronological, or based on a previous  
6       viewing of corresponding messages;

7               instructions for ordering the plurality of messages  
8       according to the user-defined sort criteria; and

9               instructions for displaying the plurality of messages in  
10      the order specified by the user-defined sort criteria.

11     20. The computer program product of claim 19, wherein the  
12     instructions for sorting a plurality of messages utilizing  
13     user-defined sort criteria including at least one criterion  
14     which is not alphabetic, chronological or based on a previous  
15     viewing of corresponding messages further comprises:

16               instructions for sorting the plurality of messages based  
17       on a user-defined prioritization of a sender's address for each  
18       message.

19     21. The computer program product of claim 20, wherein the  
20     instructions for sorting the plurality of messages based on a  
21     user-defined prioritization of a sender's address for each  
22     message further comprises:

23               comparing a sender's address for each message to a ranked  
24       list of senders' addresses.

25     22. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the

2       instructions for comparing a sender's address for each message  
3       to a ranked list of senders' addresses further comprises:

4       instructions for comparing the sender's address for each  
5       message to a ranked list of senders' addresses including a set  
6       of fixed entries specified by a user and a set of dynamic  
7       entries containing addresses selected from historical message  
8       tracking information based on rules specified by the user.

1       23. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the  
2       instructions for comparing a sender's address for each message  
3       to a ranked list of senders' addresses further comprises:

4       instructions for comparing the sender's address for each  
5       message to a set of senders' addresses specified by a user as  
6       higher priority than other messages;

7       instructions for comparing the sender's address for each  
8       message to a set of senders' addresses automatically selected  
9       based on historical message tracking information as higher  
10      priority than other messages;

11      instructions for comparing the sender's address for each  
12      message to a set of senders' addresses specified by a user as  
13      lower priority than other messages; and

14      instructions for comparing the sender's address for each  
15      message to a first set of senders' addresses automatically  
16      selected based on historical message tracking information as  
17      lower priority than other messages.

1       24. The computer program product of claim 20, wherein the  
2       instructions for ordering the plurality of messages according

3 to the user-defined sort criteria further comprises:  
4 instructions for ordering the plurality of messages with  
5 any messages including a sender's address matching an address  
6 within a first entry within the ranked list listed first, with  
7 any messages including a sender's address matching an address  
8 within a second entry within the ranked list listed second, and  
9 with any messages including a sender's address matching an  
10 address within any subsequent entry within the ranked list  
11 listed at a corresponding position within an ordered listing of  
12 the plurality of messages.

25. The computer program product of claim 20, wherein the  
instructions for sorting the plurality of messages based on a  
user-defined prioritization of a sender's address for each  
message further comprises:

instructions for comparing a sender's address within each  
message to addresses specified by a user.

26. The computer program product of claim 20, wherein the  
instructions for sorting the plurality of messages based on a  
user-defined prioritization of a sender's address for each  
message further comprises:

instructions for comparing a sender's address within each  
message to addresses selected from a historical tracking of  
previous messages based upon rules specified by a user.

27. The computer program product of claim 26, wherein the  
instructions for comparing a sender's address within each

ROC920000165US1

3 message to addresses selected from a historical tracking of  
4 previous messages based upon rules specified by a user further  
5 comprises at least one of:

6 instructions for selecting addresses from messages to  
7 which a user replies for higher listing within a sort order  
8 than addresses from messages to which the user never replies;

9 instructions for selecting addresses from messages to  
10 which a user replies more quickly than contemporaneous messages  
11 for higher listing within the sort order than other addresses;

12 instructions for selecting addresses from messages which a  
13 user opens more quickly than contemporaneous messages for  
14 higher listing within the sort order than other addresses;

15 instructions for selecting addresses from messages which a  
16 user opens more quickly than contemporaneous messages for lower  
17 listing within the sort order than other addresses; and

18 instructions for selecting addresses from messages which a  
19 user deletes without opening for lower listing within the sort  
20 order than other addresses.